



Connecticut Department of Public Health

**Testimony Presented Before the Planning and Development
Committee**

March 14, 2014

**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA
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House Bill 5505 –An Act Concerning A Study Of A State-Wide Property Maintenance Code

The Department of Public Health (DPH) supports the concept of adoption of a uniform statewide property maintenance code and provides the following information in regards to the proposed bill.

For several years, the DPH has collaborated with housing and health partners to advocate for adoption of a statewide property maintenance code; specifically adoption of portions of the International Property Maintenance Code. The Connecticut Environmental Health Association, DPH, the Department of Public Safety, and the Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney in Statewide Housing Matters convened a workgroup and developed a full set of recommendations for adoption of a statewide property maintenance code prior to 2011. Due to funding constraints, the proposal was unable to move forward.

There is currently limited authority among code enforcement officials (i.e., housing, health, and building officials) to take action to correct many housing-related issues and structural deficiencies that impact the health of occupants within properties. In many circumstances, two to five local agencies must collaborate to address a single property. Although this seems feasible, in practice, it is quite complex. Adoption of a statewide property maintenance code would leave less to interpretation, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of local and state code enforcement officials, as they pertain to housing.

The adoption of a uniform statewide property maintenance code would streamline authority and enforcement, and ultimately result in improved health outcomes for occupants, particularly those people who currently reside in substandard housing units.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 5505.

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